

their distinct operational requirement/limitations, route network, mix of aircraft fleet and input prices characteristics like rate of exchange, customs duty and other taxes/levies, etc.

(c) and (d) Airlines make continuous endeavour to reduce the operational cost and optimize resource earning through various measures *viz.* better fleet utilization, improvement in quality of products, marketing initiatives, cost control mechanism etc.

Complimentary air tickets

2552. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of free air tickets issued by the Airlines in their commercial interest and to encourage and promote travel on the national carriers during the last three years, year-wise; and

(b) the details of benefits accrued during these years by providing these complimentary tickets?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) The number of complimentary tickets issued by the Air India and Indian Airlines during the last three years are as under:—

No. of complimentary tickets issued

Year	Air India	Indian Airlines
1997-98	726	590
1998-99	1164	860
1999-2000	983	955

(b) These tickets are issued for publicity and promotional purposes. The benefits accrued are in the form of enhancing their market image, goodwill and publicity.

Grading of AI and IA in terms of safety

2553. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: